

**Seventh Indonesia–Malaysia–Thailand Growth Triangle Summit
Ninth Brunei–Darussalam–Indonesia–Malaysia–Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area
Summit**

**25 April 2013
Brunei Darussalam**

I. Background

1. The Indonesia–Malaysia–Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT–GT) and the Brunei Darussalam–Indonesia–Malaysia–Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP–EAGA) are subregional and subnational cooperation initiatives which were launched in 1993 and 1994, respectively, by the concerned governments. Geographically, the IMT–GT includes 32 provinces and states—14 provinces in southern Thailand, 8 northern states of Peninsular Malaysia, and 10 provinces in the entire island of Sumatra in Indonesia. The BIMP–EAGA covers the entire sultanate of Brunei; the provinces of Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Maluku and West Papua of Indonesia; the states of Sabah and Sarawak and the federal territory of Labuan in Malaysia; and Mindanao region and the province of Palawan in the Philippines.

2. Both programs aim to help address the socioeconomic development needs of the less developed and disadvantaged areas of their member countries through growth-inducing activities by facilitating trade, tourism, and investment within their subregions, backed by their respective strategies to mobilize the private sector as the engine of growth. Despite their common thrusts, the two programs differ slightly in their focus and approach to cooperation given their inherent differences. The IMT–GT is a natural bloc given the many complementarities, geographical proximity, and close historical, cultural and linguistic ties between the member states and provinces. The BIMP–EAGA is linked by a long history of archipelagic trade and less formal economic relations.

3. In BIMP–EAGA, the strategic focus of the program, centered on two economic corridors,¹ is on enhancing connectivity within BIMP–EAGA as well as with other regions outside of BIMP–EAGA, establishing BIMP–EAGA as a food basket for ASEAN and the rest of Asia, promoting BIMP–EAGA as a premier regional tourism destination, and ensuring the sustainable management of the environment. In IMT–GT, the strategic thrusts are to (i) facilitate and promote intra- and inter-IMT–GT trade and investment; (ii) promote the growth of agriculture, agro-industry, and tourism; (iii) strengthen infrastructure linkages and support to the integration of the IMT–GT subregion; (iv) develop human resource and skills competencies, enhance mobility of labor, and strengthen environment and natural resource management; and (v) strengthen institutional arrangements and mechanisms for cooperation, including public-private sector collaboration, participation of stakeholders at the local level, and the mobilization of support from development partners; are being implemented across five economic corridors.²

¹ Two priority economic corridors have been designated, namely, the Western Borneo Economic Corridor (WBEC) and the Greater Sulu Sulawesi Corridor (GSSC).

² IMT-GT has identified five economic corridors, namely: (i) Extended Songkhla-Penang-Medan Corridor (Nakhon Si Thammarat-Phatthalung-Songkhla-Yala-Pattani-Penang-Medan); (ii) Straits of Malacca Corridor (covering the western coastal belt from Trang in Southern Thailand to Melaka in Peninsular Malaysia); (iii) Banda Aceh-Medan-Pekanbaru-Palembang Economic Corridor (a corridor running south to north through Sumatra); (iv) Melaka-Dumai Economic Corridor (a corridor linking Sumatra and Peninsular Malaysia); and (v) Ranong-Phuket-Aceh Economic Corridor. The programs and projects are being implemented by six working groups: infrastructure and transport; trade and investment; agriculture, agro-based industry and environment; halal products and services; tourism; and human resources development.

While the development of economic corridors was commonly adopted by the two programs, BIMP–EAGA’s designated corridors are more geographic-type expanses based on cardinal points/directions compared to the more specific grouping of routes for the IMT–GT designated corridors.

4. ADB has been the Regional Development Advisor for BIMP–EAGA since 2001 and the Development Partner of IMT–GT since 2006. ADB has been supporting these subregional groupings through regional technical assistance (RETAs), providing them with strategic, policy and technical advice and institutional strengthening support.

5. With the expiration of the BIMP–EAGA Roadmap for Development in 2010 and the IMT–GT Roadmap for Development in 2011,³ and assessments indicating that their respective strategic thrusts remained appropriate but project implementation remained slow, each subregional grouping endorsed their respective Implementation Blueprints (IBs), 2012-2016,⁴ which were prepared with the assistance of the ADB, at the Sixth IMT–GT and Eighth BIMP–EAGA Summits held on 4 April 2012 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. The adoption of the IBs signaled a gear shift of the two programs toward result focused oriented project implementation. The overarching objective of the IBs is to focus on the implementation of already identified projects and activities in both hardware and software for more effective results delivery. The initial two-year rolling pipelines (2012-2013) of the IBs also include some of the priority infrastructure projects to accelerate development of the connectivity corridors. The IB also includes enhanced institutional mechanisms and operational processes that are expected to improve sustainable project development and actual implementation.

6. The Leaders' Summit is held annually in tandem with the ASEAN Summit in April/May. The Summit provides a venue for IMT–GT and BIMP–EAGA Leaders to take stock of key developments in their subregional cooperation programs over the past year, and to provide guidance on future strategic directions. The Summit is participated in by Heads of States/Governments of the member countries, the Secretary General of the ASEAN, and the ADB President. The Seventh IMT–GT and Ninth BIMP–EAGA Summits were both held on 25 April 2013 at the Prime Minister’s Office, Brunei Darussalam.

II. Highlights of the Summits

A. Seventh Summit of the Indonesia–Malaysia–Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT–GT) Subregional Cooperation Program

7. The Seventh IMT–GT Summit was chaired by H.E. Tan Sri Abu Zahar Bin Dato’ Nika Ujang, President of the Senate, Parliament of Malaysia and Special Representative of the Prime Minister of Malaysia. The Indonesian delegation was led by H.E. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, President of the Republic of Indonesia and Thailand delegation was led by the H.E. Yingluck Shinawatra, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand. The Summit was also attended by, H.E. Le Luong Minh, the Secretary-General of ASEAN and, Mr. Bindu Lohani the Ranking Vice-President of the Asian Development Bank.

³ Available at http://adb.org/sites/default/files/BIMP-EAGA-Roadmap-Development-2006-2010_0.pdf and <http://www.imtgt.org/Documents/Books/roadmap-development.pdf>, respectively.

⁴ Available at <http://www.bimp-eaga.org/Documents/ef4b1b8e-7291-40a5-9a0a-2d0250543801.pdf> and http://imtgt.org/Documents/IMT-GT_Implementation_Blueprint_2012-2016.pdf, respectively.

8. The IMT–GT Leaders welcomed the progress of IMT–GT cooperation in 2012/2013 as reported by Datuk Dr. Rahamat Bivi binti Yusoff, Director General of the Economic Planning Unit (EPU) in Malaysia. The Report highlighted the key achievements of the IMT–GT subregional program, among others: (i) official signing of the Center of IMT–GT (CIMT) establishment agreement which legalized the CIMT as the IMT–GT secretariat; (ii) progress in Priority Connectivity Projects of IMT–GT projects covering power, land, air and maritime connectivity; and (iii) new initiatives such as the Green Cities Initiative, and the Special Border Economic Zone and joint IMT–GT and BIMP–EAGA events.

9. The Leaders stressed the need to further strengthen the connectivity within the IMT–GT area, as part of the efforts to achieve greater regional integration, and ensure development of “hard” infrastructure, and also “software” side of the connectivity, particularly in transport and trade facilitation. The Leaders reiterated that stronger connectivity would facilitate better flow of goods, services, and investments among our three countries, as well as within the ASEAN region. The Leaders encouraged the facilitation of trade in the subregion to ensure implementation of systematic measures in the subregion and maximize the use and benefits of existing ASEAN trade facilitation initiatives in the subregion. The Leaders were pleased to take note of the statistical information brochure at the Summit entitled “IMT–GT at a Glance”, which provided brief economic indicators, trade, investment and tourism data of the subregion and stressed the importance for a continuous enhancement of the database to monitor the progress in IMT–GT. The Leaders requested ADB to continue its support for this undertaking.

10. The Leaders agreed to fast track the implementation of four selected “signature projects” including (i) Melaka-Pekanbaru Power Interconnection; (ii) Green City initiatives with Medan, Songkla and Melaka as pioneer cities; (iii) Special Border Economic Zone between Thailand and Malaysia; and (iv) Melaka-Dumai Roll-On-Roll-Off (RORO) maritime interconnection. The fast tracked projects were expected to be delivered by 2015 and serve as IMT–GT “signature projects” and provide a concrete contribution to the ASEAN Economic Community. ADB was requested to support the implementation of these selected projects by providing the technical assistance needed and establish a special implementation task force for each project.

11. The Leaders expressed their appreciation for the strategic policy advice and technical assistance provided by ADB. The Leaders requested ADB to continue its support in mobilizing resources to support investment projects in IMT–GT through its various financing schemes as well as the ASEAN Infrastructure Fund (AIF). The countries expressed their intention to work together with ASEAN and ADB to explore strategic linkages to maximize the role of IMT–GT as a delivery mechanism for the ASEAN Community. The Leaders also stressed the need to strengthen collaboration with ASEAN and BIMP–EAGA as well as cooperation with other development partners within the region and in neighboring regions such as South Asia and the Pacific.

12. The Leaders welcomed the establishment of the CIMT as the Secretariat of IMT–GT as it reaffirmed countries’ commitment to subregional cooperation. The CIMT would serve as the secretariat that would facilitate and coordinate implementation of projects. It would be located in Putrajaya, Malaysia, and be operated by equal contribution from all IMT–GT Member Countries. The Leaders welcomed the incoming CIMT Director from Thailand and called for all member countries to support him in undertaking his duties.

13. Ranking Vice-President Lohani highlighted that the fast-tracked “signature projects” represented a major contribution of the IMT–GT to the ASEAN Community by 2015. He assured

the Leaders that ADB would work closely with the Implementation Task Force and provide the needed technical support, project coordination assistance, and would help mobilize financial resources, including those from the ASEAN Infrastructure Fund (AIF). ADB, as regional development partner of IMT–GT, expressed its commitment to work closely with the Governments to realize IMT–GT’s vision to achieve an ASEAN Community by 2015.

14. The ASEAN Secretary-General Le Luong Minh expressed appreciation for deliberations between IMT–GT and ADB, and the support being provided by the latter in terms of policy advice and technical assistance in operationalizing the existing institutional structure to effectively carry out the IMT–GT Implementation Blueprint for 2012–2016. He highlighted that ASEAN recognize the importance of promoting links and interfacing with IMT–GT to broaden and deepen partnerships since IMT–GT was one of the delivery mechanisms for carrying out aspects of the ASEAN Community. Related to this, Mr. Le Luong Minh suggested a follow-up meeting to the 2011 Roundtable Discussion among IMT officials and the ASEAN Secretariat to explore areas of collaboration and help establish stronger linkages through specific initiatives at the sectoral level.

15. The Joint Statement of the IMT–GT Leaders is in Appendix 1.

B. Ninth Summit of the Brunei–Darussalam–Indonesia–Malaysia–Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP–EAGA)

16. The Ninth BIMP–EAGA Summit was chaired by His Majesty the Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah of Brunei Darussalam. The Indonesian delegation was led by H.E. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, President of the Republic of Indonesia; the Malaysian delegation was led by H.E. Tan Sri Abu Zahar Bin Dato’ Nika Ujang, President of the Senate, parliament of Malaysia and Special Representative of the Prime Minister of Malaysia; and the Philippines was led by the President of the Philippines, H.E. Benigno C. Aquino III. The Summit was also attended by the Secretary-General of ASEAN, H.E. Le Luong Minh, and the Ranking Vice-President of the Asian Development Bank, Mr. Bindu Lohani.

17. The Leaders took note on the report by Pehin Lim Jok Seng, Second Minister of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Brunei Darussalam, which highlighted that the subregion was on track to realizing the mission and vision of BIMP–EAGA to increase trade, investments, and tourism by facilitating the freer movement of goods, services, and people. The Leaders reiterated the importance of the BIMP–EAGA subregional economic cooperation strategy in supporting the realization of the ASEAN Community.

18. The Leaders expressed their satisfaction and stressed the importance of implementing Priority Infrastructure Projects (PIPs), since their endorsement of the Implementation Blueprint (IB) 2012-2016 at the Eight BIMP–EAGA Summit. They looked forward to the finalization of the “Result-Based Monitoring and Evaluation Framework”, with assistance from the ADB, to provide indicators and assessment of the substantive outcomes and impacts of these projects to the subregion. The Leaders were mindful of the challenges, including the need to ensure effective sequencing and synergy of projects, among the four pillars of BIMP–EAGA, i.e. connectivity, food basket, tourism and environment, to be jointly implemented by Sectoral Ministers.

19. Leaders reiterated their strong belief in forging stronger subregional cooperative arrangements to function as building blocks of ASEAN-wide regional cooperation. The Leaders stressed the importance of a fully-functioning central secretariat and urged the finalization of

arrangements for the BIMP–EAGA Facilitation Centre by the next Ministerial Meeting. The Leaders expressed appreciation of ADB as the Regional Development Advisor and urged ADB to continue its support in delivering projects. The Leaders also recognized the important roles of private sector, development partners, and local stakeholders and urged them to explore innovative modalities for partnership.

20. The ADB Ranking Vice President congratulated the Governments of Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia and Philippines for vigorously pursuing substantial outcomes in several areas critical to achieving sustainable economic development and enabling the full participation of the subregion in the ASEAN integration process. He stressed ADB's role in assisting in the operationalization of the Implementation Blueprint through the implementation of connectivity projects including (i) road improvement project in Kalimantan, Indonesia, which was also part of the ASEAN Highway Network; (ii) Sarawak-Kalimantan Power Interconnection Project, which had been identified under the Master Plan for ASEAN connectivity. The ADB Ranking Vice President stressed the needs for the countries to look beyond 2015. In order to sustain the recent growth performance and avoid the middle-income trap, he suggested three critical areas for special attention: continuous economic diversification; improving the quality of human resources; and forging effective public-private dialogues to enable small and medium enterprises to join production networks and upgrade themselves in the global value chain.

21. The ASEAN Secretary General indicated that with the adoption of the Implementation Blueprint, there were ample opportunities to explore synergy between ASEAN and the subregional groupings given the complementary objectives and activities that were being pursued at both the subregional and regional level. He further highlighted subregional cooperation as a critical component of ASEAN integration and community building efforts and that the synergies between the two will offer immense potential for growth and development. Political commitments from countries and continued assistance from development partners such as ADB would be critical to transform such a collaborative effort between ASEAN and the subregion into reality.

22. The Joint Statement of the BIMP–EAGA Leaders is in Appendix 2.

III. Conclusion

23. Leaders of both IMT–GT and BIMP–EAGA: (i) agreed that there was a need to accelerate project implementation in each subregion; (ii) called for greater involvement of private sector, development partners, and local governments and seek their support in mobilizing additional financing resources; (iii) emphasized that hardware connectivity development needed to be reinforced by critical complementary software initiatives; (iv) recognized the importance of having a fully-functioning central secretariat in monitoring the progress of cooperation; (v) recognized the need to coordinate closely between ASEAN and the subregions; and (vi) acknowledged the role of ADB, as Regional Development Advisor/ Development Partner in delivering of signature projects by the subregions and mobilization of financial resources, including those from AIF.

24. Both the Ninth BIMP–EAGA Summit and the Seventh IMT–GT Summit highlighted the critical role of subregional groupings in contributing to the ASEAN integration and called for further action towards more visible results for the two subregional cooperation programs and ASEAN.



The 7th Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth-Triangle Summit

JOINT STATEMENT

Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam

25 April 2013

JOINT STATEMENT
THE 7TH SUMMIT OF INDONESIA-MALAYSIA-THAILAND GROWTH-TRIANGLE (IMT-GT)

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, BRUNEI DARUSSALAM, 25 April 2013

1. We, the leaders of the respective Governments of the Republic of Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Kingdom of Thailand, met today in Brunei Darussalam, on the occasion of the 7th Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth-Triangle (IMT-GT) Summit to review the progress in cooperation and development prospects in the IMT-GT subregion. We recognize that IMT-GT cooperation has continued to perform an important role in sustaining our economic stability and resiliency in the current global economic crisis.
2. We expressed our appreciation to our Ministers and Senior Officials as well as the Joint Business Council and other stakeholders on the progress made in the implementation of programmes and projects in 2012 under the IMT-GT Implementation Blueprint 2012-2016. We are pleased by the revitalized commitment and involvement by the IMT-GT states and provinces in identifying priority projects to be included in the Rolling Pipelines of the Implementation Blueprint and urge them to work closely with the relevant central government.
3. We welcomed the signing of the Establishment Agreement of the Centre for IMT-GT Subregional Cooperation (CIMT) by all three IMT-GT Member Countries which signified concrete reinforced commitments by all Member Countries in our subregional cooperation. We are confident that a strengthened CIMT would contribute significantly in ensuring effective delivery of IMT-GT programs and projects. We thanked Malaysia for supporting the interim arrangement to shoulder the operational budget of CIMT prior to its signing.
4. We are pleased to note the significant progress in IB implementation, particularly the Priority Connectivity Projects which, among others, includes (i) Melaka-Pekanbaru Power Interconnection; (ii) Expansion of Bukit Kayu Hitam -Sadao ICQS complex; (iii) Hat Yai-Sadao Intercity Motorway; (iv) Southern Thailand Ports Development; and (v) Inland Container Depot in Thungsong.
5. We are also pleased to note progress in other connectivity projects such as new bridge linking at Tak Bai, Narathiwat - Pengkalan Kubor, Kelantan and the second bridge at Sungai Golok, Narathiwat - Rantau Panjang, Kelantan with integrated border economic activities including border economic zones. We also welcomed the initiative to develop Special Economic Zone between Malaysia and Thailand that would ensure that projects on both sides of the countries would be complementary and thus maximise its benefits and impact. We seek ADB's support in conducting this joint study. We reaffirmed our support to these projects and urged the officials to accelerate the progress where possible.
6. We further noted that sea routes in IMT-GT remain critical for ASEAN with the identification of the Melaka – Dumai, and Penang - Belawan – Phuket, as part of the priority routes in the ASEAN commissioned study by JICA. We therefore affirmed our support for this project to ensure its realization and tasked our officials to accelerate its operations. We are also pleased with the enhanced air connectivity in the sub-region with 10 new routes between Malaysia-Thailand and Malaysia-Indonesia. We urged our officials to ensure the development of the software connectivity, by, among others, identifying areas of ASEAN transport agreements where early implementation in the subregion is possible.

7. We urged our Ministers to work further in facilitating trade in the subregion to ensure implementation of systematic measures in the subregion and maximize the use and benefits of existing trade facilitation initiatives in ASEAN in the subregion. We commended the completion of the first phase of the subregional database which includes relevant socio-economic, trade, investment, and tourism data at both national and subregional level. We thanked ADB for the support in establishing the database and tasked our officials to ensure the sustainability and continuous improvement of the database.

8. We commended the initiative of the Chief Ministers and Governors of IMT-GT to develop the “Green Cities” in the sub-region which aims to anchor comprehensive Action Plans to facilitate launching pads and welcomed the designation of Medan- Indonesia, Melaka- Malaysia and Songkhla- Thailand to be the pioneer cities participating in this initiative. We agreed to work towards the adoption of an IMT-GT Green Cities Initiative Development Framework which will serve as a guideline for the cities in the subregion and enabled the initiative to radiate across their respective regions. We thanked and requested ADB to continue extending its technical support on this initiative.

9. We commended the successful convening of the 1st BIMP-EAGA and IMT-GT Business Transformation Leaders Conference: “Promoting High-Value Agriculture through Public-Private Partnerships” which was held on 1 December 2012 and the 1st BIMP-EAGA & IMT-GT Consumer Fair 2012 which was held in Melaka, Malaysia on 30 November to 2 December 2012 and the positive outcomes of the conference in forging new private sector joint venture initiatives namely on Swiftlet Eco-Park and Biotech Organic Fertilizers. We are also pleased to note that this excellent collaboration between IMT-GT and its sister sub-regional grouping of BIMP-EAGA would be continued with the convening of the 2nd BIMP-EAGA & IMT-GT Business Transformation Leaders Conference and Consumer Fair to be held in the Philippines in 2014.

10. We reiterated our commitment that as Members of ASEAN, our IMT-GT Cooperation shall always seek to contribute to those of ASEAN’s goals. We will continue to work together with ASEAN and ADB to explore strategic linkages to maximize the role of IMT-GT as a delivery mechanism for the ASEAN Community, including establishment of an equitable economic development community and narrowing the development gap among and within ASEAN Member States.

11. We also reinforced the need to expedite the delivery of concrete projects on the ground and agreed to fast track the projects as “signature projects” of IMT-GT and ensure its realization by 2015 so as to serve as concrete contributions to the ASEAN Community by that year. We urged the establishment of a Project Implementation Task Force for each of the signature project to ensure on time delivery and tasked our Ministers to work with ADB in undertaking this initiative. We identified (i) Special Border Economic Zone between Thailand and Malaysia; (ii) Melaka-Pekanbaru Power Interconnection; (iii) Melaka-Dumai RoRo maritime connectivity; and (iv) IMT-GT Green Cities initiative as the signature projects and urged the officials to continue exploring other signature projects.

12. We appreciated the strategic policy advise and technical assistance provided by ADB in various IMT-GT initiatives. We further expressed our appreciation for ADB’s support in the area of trade and trade facilitation and requested ADB to continue its support in these sectors. We requested ADB to mobilize resources to support investment projects through its various existing financing schemes and the ASEAN Infrastructure Fund (AIF). We tasked our Officials to work closely with ADB on the on-going initiatives as well as future development in IMT-GT such as exploring possible measures that would enable development of sustainable programming and to attract investment that is practical, implementable and result-focused into IMT-GT.

13. We reiterated our interest to further strengthen our cooperation with current Development Partners, Japan and ERIA, and looked forward to expand to other potential development partner in neighboring sub-region such as South Asia and the Pacific. We tasked CIMT to propose concrete scope of cooperation in order to reach greater opportunities in reaching regional transportation and logistics network and potential markets for IMT-GT products, and have an exchange of expertise in potential areas such as alternative energy, tourism, halal science and technology, food security and human resource development.

14. We expressed our sincere appreciation and gratitude to the Government of Malaysia for successful chairmanship and Government of Brunei Darussalam for successful hosting the 7th IMT-GT Summit.

End of Joint Statement.



JOINT STATEMENT
NINTH BRUNEI DARUSSALAM – INDONESIA – MALAYSIA – PHILIPPINES
EAST ASEAN GROWTH AREA SUMMIT
(9th BIMP-EAGA SUMMIT)

25 April 2013

Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam

1. We, the Leaders of Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines, met for the 9th BIMP-EAGA Summit in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam, on 25 April 2013, to review the progress of cooperation and to provide further direction in the pursuit of our shared vision of establishing BIMP-EAGA as a regional food basket and ecotourism destination through enhanced connectivity for trade and investment, whilst ensuring sustainable management of the environment. We reiterated the importance of sub-regional economic cooperation of BIMP-EAGA as a strategy in supporting the realisation of the ASEAN Community.
2. Trade will continue to be one of the main cornerstones of BIMP-EAGA cooperation. As such, we are pleased to note that for the period 2009 to 2011, the total trade value of BIMP-EAGA grew significantly by 72% from USD 80 billion in 2009 to USD 138 billion in 2011. Intra-EAGA trade represented nearly 25% of the total EAGA trade over the same period. We are also pleased to note the positive trend in Foreign Direct Investment in BIMP-EAGA Member Countries which have grown significantly by 124% from USD 24 billion in 2009 to USD 55 billion in 2011.
3. We are pleased with the progress in implementing Priority Infrastructure Projects, since our endorsement of the Implementation Blueprint (IB) 2012 - 2016 at the 8th BIMP-EAGA Summit. We took note that the 2013-2014 rolling pipeline projects have been identified that will further contribute to the attainment of the BIMP-EAGA vision. We look forward to the finalisation of the “Result-Based Monitoring and Evaluation Framework” to provide indicators and assessment of the substantive outcomes and impacts of these projects to our community. We reiterated on the need for effective and timely implementation of the IB and therefore, we tasked our Sectoral Ministers to jointly coordinate and implement these BIMP-EAGA priority projects.

4. We recognised the need to synergise through greater coordination, among the four pillars of BIMP-EAGA, i.e. connectivity, food basket, tourism and environment, to further improve economic development and also narrowing the development gap within the BIMP-EAGA Member Countries. We are pleased that, under the connectivity pillar, transport initiatives continue to be sustained. Amongst others, we welcomed the commencement of Malaysia's MASWings flights on 1 February 2013 between Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia and Balikpapan, Indonesia as well as flight between Kuching, Malaysia and Balikpapan, Indonesia. We also welcomed the additional designation of Tawau and Mulu in Malaysia; Makassar in Indonesia; and Cagayan De Oro in Philippines as BIMP-EAGA points for fifth freedom traffic rights.
5. We welcomed the initiatives to improve the ICT literacy in the rural community through the ICT Rural Outreach Program. We applauded the ICT sector for the successful launching of Phase I of the BIMP-EAGA Rink project as a stepping stone to develop the BIMP-EAGA region as a communications hub. We are pleased to note the convening of the inaugural Informal BIMP-EAGA Telecommunications and ICT Ministers Meeting on 14 November 2012 in Cebu, Philippines which provided further direction in moving the ICT agenda forward.
6. We recognised the performance of the tourism sector in the last three years which has demonstrated strong potential for growth. The combined foreign and domestic arrivals in BIMP-EAGA registered a 40% increase, from 13 million in 2009 to 17 million in 2011. We, therefore, appreciated the continuous efforts of the tourism sector to promote the Equator Asia tourism brand and thus, we welcomed the arrangement of various BIMP-EAGA signature tourism events. We also welcomed their efforts in pursuing various infrastructure development and promotion activities, as well as capacity building program at the Community-Based Ecotourism Pilot Sites, and hosting a BIMP-EAGA familiarisation tour for media and travel writers from China.
7. In strengthening food security in the sub-region, we commended the successful conduct of the 1st BIMP-EAGA and IMT-GT Consumer Fair and the BIMP-EAGA and IMT-GT Business Transformation Leaders Conference: Promoting High-Value Agriculture through Public-Private Partnerships held in Melaka, Malaysia on 30 November - 2 December 2012 and the positive outcomes of the conference in forging new private sector joint venture initiatives namely, on Biotech Organic Fertilizers and Swiftlet Eco-Park. We look forward to the conduct of the 2nd BIMP-EAGA and IMT-GT Consumer Fair to be hosted in the Philippines in 2014. We also commended the private sector joint venture initiatives in the Hybrid Rice Seed production.

8. We tasked our Sectoral Ministers to look into ways of ensuring sustainable use of natural resources in the sub-region, in an effort to conserve the environment for future generations. In this regard, we encouraged active engagement with global environment players to support our work in ensuring the preservation of two of the richest biodiversity areas in the world, namely the Heart of Borneo and the Coral Triangle (Sulu-Sulawesi Marine Eco-region).
9. We recognised the ever-increasing initiatives that are currently being pursued under the BIMP-EAGA cooperation and on the need to effectively coordinate and monitor them through a fully-functioning central secretariat. We look forward to the finalisation of the institutional arrangements for the establishment of the BIMP-EAGA Facilitation Centre (BIMP-FC) by the next Ministerial Meeting.
10. We called on the BIMP-EAGA Business Council (BEBC) to continue to advocate greater ease of doing business and facilitation of cross-border trade and investment in the sub-region. We urged the private sector, our Senior Officials, local governments and officials from the various sectors to strengthen public-private partnerships and reinforce collective efforts at exploring innovative modalities for partnerships particularly in the area of enhancing connectivity, establishing food basket and promoting tourism in BIMP-EAGA.
11. We thanked our Regional Development Advisor, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), for their continued assistance in the operationalisation of the Implementation Blueprint (IB) 2012-2016 and in the provision of technical assistance projects in supporting the development of connectivity infrastructure and trade facilitation. We urged ADB to continue its support and also consider providing their assistance in delivering projects.
12. We appreciated the ASEAN Secretariat's increasing engagement with BIMP-EAGA and, therefore, welcomed the conduct of the ASEAN Secretariat – BIMP EAGA Consultation on 4 March 2013 in its efforts to align the BIMP-EAGA development with the ASEAN Community agenda. We urged them to pursue identified follow through activities to strengthen ASEAN – BIMP-EAGA collaboration. We support the higher profiling of BIMP-EAGA with ASEAN's Dialogue Partners and External Parties.
13. We are pleased with BIMP-EAGA's engagement with China and Japan. We look forward to greater cooperation by all stakeholders to establish actual joint venture undertakings with China and with Japan. We tasked our Senior Officials to identify new Development Partners.

14. We expressed our sincere appreciation and gratitude to the Government of Brunei Darussalam for the warm hospitality and the excellent meeting arrangements.